

6
THE
TRIUNE AFFINITY
OF
J E H O V A H
VINDICATED,
AND THE DISTINCT PERSONS
IN THE
G O D H E A D
E V I N C E D,
IN ANSWER TO
THREE DISCOURSES,
PREACHED BY
M A N O A H S I B L Y,

ON

Who is the LORD?

Together with an Invincible Demonstration of

What is the Right Object of Worship?

SUPPORTED BY SCRIPTURE.

ADDRESSED TO THE
PEOPLE OF WOLVERHAMPTON.



HEB. i. 8, 9, 10.

JOHN xvi. 28, 29.

L O N D O N :

PUBLISHED BY M. TRAPP, PATERNOSTER ROW.



P R E F A C E.

IT becomes every Author to introduce his sentiments with deference to public notice; but in theological writings more especially; my apology shall consist in giving up the true causes for publishing the following Dissertations, earnestly hoping some Members in the Christian Church may thereby be established in the faith.

The first was owing to an acquaintance taking great pains to convince me of the absurdity of believing there was three persons in the Godhead. To this end I had every new publication in Baron Swedenburgh's sentiments put into my hands. The last of these was three Sermons, published in June 1792, by Mr. Sibley, whereas the more I read the
more

more my eyes were opened to behold the inconsistencies they contained.

The second reason was, because the chief of these extravagancies were disavowed by a very respectable divine, a disciple of Baron Swedenburgh's, who went so far as to brand them with enthusiasm—after having been lain aside above two months, the third inducement condemns them to public exhibition.

Travelling through Staffordshire, I found some dissensions existed, as to the proper object of worship, between the Arians and Swedenburgians this question became confounded and misinterpreted. The first description of error requires no other means for detection, than an examination of their love to the object they profess to worship; where is their affection? where their zeal? where their holiness? where and what sort of conversions? where their success? where their spiritual life, humility, and devotedness to God? The last may be tried by the same touch-stone; and in addition to it, it would not be a fruitless experiment to arrange their visionary doctrines, and oppose them to the simplicity

simplicity of the word of God. By this means, the authors of it would be found guilty, and become exposed in the sight of men and angels, to all the plagues written in the book of God, for both adding to, and diminishing from the words of sacred writ.

Leaving these, I shall confine my prefatory address to the wavering in Zion. In all ages of the church, the devil selected certain persons disaffected to true worship, ill according with their ambition and pride, a triune God was too much for them; and more than they could worship aright; and in this age of infidelity, they are not satisfied with liberty, and the Rights of Man with man; but in how many instances they betray a disposition to be independant of God? From such may every believer in Jesus turn aside. An infinite Surety is wanted to atone for infinite offences: the Sacrifice was accepted: the blood was precious: it has proved the balm in Gilead to a host of saints, which no man can number for multitude. What a wide difference between a moral sentiment, an erroneous doctrine, and genuine life, in a spiritual existence.

The Scriptures say, *ye must be born again*, through Christ; the Son of God.—The Arian denies it; others cavil and say, How can these things be? Believer! what dost thou think? In point of thy profession, doctrine, and worship, had any impeached the reality and purity of it at one time, your blood would be in a ferment of resentment, let you be of whatever denomination; but now you experience such a change as constrains you to cry out, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. I believe, help thou mine unbelief.* In this character is epitomized the new birth, the humble and contrite spirit; the temple of the living God.

Some apology is due to the well-affected among the congregations so particularly addressed; but as the whole is addressed on the side of the true worshippers, I am assured they will receive me as a Soldier (however feeble) enlisted under the same cause, in which sense I shall ever remain,

Their Friend and Servant,

E.

ANSWER

A N S W E R

T O

Mr. Sibly's Three Discourses:

Dear Sir,

I HAVE read Mr. Sibly's Three Discourses, which you obligingly presented to me, and looked at them without prejudice, therefore bear with me while I candidly give a few sketches of my opinion concerning them.

I was much surpris'd the leading doctrines enfranchise man of God, by the perfection of his will, and deprive God of his prerogative by a blunder in the creation of it, making it independant of himself. God has now nothing left but a wish; a desire, an intreaty, that man may be good. The author's heart could not be consulted, or it would have told him, that it is of itself *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*: he would know that it is *prone to evil as the sparks fly upwards*; and
in

in order to be delivered from this corruption and bondage, being helpless and undone, we are directed to look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith and goodness; to pray that we may stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free—that man can do nothing of himself; it is the gift of God. See the 18th page of the Sermons. Very bad indeed is that will, that is its own prompter: that is not sweetly influenced by a supernatural agency.

Mr. Sibly says, that “no delight could accrue to any thing, only operated upon by another, however the operator may be pleased.” But does not this reflect on the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, whose influence must afford delight? whose recreating effects are pleasantness and peace? who is the source of joy, the dispenser of happiness? whose first purposes fore-ordained, who continues to sway the sceptre of Omnipotence, who made all things subservient? It is not only an honour to be operated upon by him; *for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*; but a communication of comfort is opened to the mind, that the world are perfect strangers to.

As he goes on in the same page, he flatly contradicts himself by an illustrative comparison; and in the latter part of the 52d page, crowns the contradiction, by returning to the position

position he is attempting to destroy; for he says, "so is the same process, and the force of the same almighty power, equally necessary to regenerate a single individual." But in the very next page, undoes all again by saying, that "God cannot force; he asks the heart; and in regeneration man must co-operate; for without this the Lord, with all his omnipotence, cannot save a single soul."

Join with me in praying the Lord to open the eyes of Mr. Sibly, to know the solid truths contained in his word: at present he must be a stranger to that saying, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and whom I will, I harden; and this, O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Your author makes man equal with God: gives him a sovereign will, which, independant of an omnipotent nature, to carry it into effect, is of small moment. Throughout the whole, it appears to me clearly, Mr. Sibly takes up his sentiments on the most partial and contracted sense imaginable.

Equally futile and erroneous, he places his arguments to prove the self-existence and concentered Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ. Him whom God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, in whom it pleased another, viz. the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell. In the creation of man, he

is

is traced—*Let us make man*: from God the idea originated, and he employed his only begotten Son, being of one and the same substance as the Father, to assist in the performance, from whom is derived the Holy Spirit, which proceeded from the Father and the Son, and which breathed upon the waters.

In the work of redemption he accepted an appointment, and became a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God; and though descended into an inferior capacity to promote his Father's glory; though joined to the infirmities of humanity; though humbled by taking upon him the similitude and state of man, yet his divine nature is the same; the life and glory of his manhood deficient neither in *power* or *parts*: he was the same yesterday as now, and for ever: he had parted with none of his Godhead; all was complete to render the atonement perfect, and which shined with infinite beauty through the veil of his flesh. The Scripture say, a body hast *thou* prepared me; lo I come to do *thy will*, O God. No soul is spoken of to capacitate that body, other than the person that spoke; therefore after having entered into his human nature, when Christ prayed to the Father while on earth, having his divine nature in his own person, he plainly prays to another, who, though concerted in the same work, must be a separate person and character,

character, to whom the Son also shall be subject even to him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all; all to Christ, and in all to his people. By God the Father, the Messiah is fitted for the Embassy: commissioned for the mighty errand; invested with peculiar gifts, and by a cloud of Scriptures, perfectly plain and unparabolical, prove to be distinctly two persons, acting in conjunction to promote one effect; namely, the salvation of man; and in this sense only can that text be considered—I and my Father are one: that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, as I in them, and they in me; that they may all be made perfect in one. Was he the Father, the Father could not be out of him, and then he would have prayed to himself; but he prayed to his Father which was in Heaven. Here is a difference of place as well as character and person intimated: men are actuated by the *Spirit of God*, to *do the will of God*, and thus become the Sons of God; and they not carry the same idea to an infinite act of Jehovah, by which his only-begotten Son becomes the express image of his person, and uncontaminated either by sin, or the fall *remains the same in essence, holiness, and purpose*. This mysterious character, as to his divine nature, was begotten without woman in heaven, so also his human nature was begotten without man upon

upon the earth*. Neither is it meet that a person frame laws, and to heal the breach of them, suffer himself instead of the violators of it. It is not seemly in an all-seeing God, before whom nothing is hid to make a law, which none but himself can establish and fulfil, and which involves himself in the penalty thereof. No; for though out of compassion his arm wrought salvation by the appointment of his Son to make it honorable, he himself must be supposed sitting on his throne of judgment, approving the sacrifice, receiving the atonement, granting what his Son obtained, (whom he loved before the world began) *gifts, graces, and mercies for men*. Christ said to his disciples, Abide in me, and I in you. Thus there was a one-ship in a secondary point of view, as between God the Father and God the Son, primarily and originally. I am the vine, he says, and my Father is husbandman. Here he acknowledges a superior and original hand; this vine was not of a spontaneous growth, consequently he came forth from the Father; yet he was the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There is a separate intelligence plainly intimated: all things I have heard of my Father, &c.

Your preacher takes in too many philosophical ideas, by which he means to judge of this divine and glorious mystery, reserved for

* Thus Christ was without Mother, as God; without Father, as Man.

unravelment on that day, when the wisdom of the world will be turned into foolishness; canst thou, by searching, find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? The measure thereof is broader than the sea, and longer than the earth; it is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? Our Redeemer says, thine they were by the creation and the fall, as being supreme; but by the covenant of thy grace thou hast given them to me, in mercy to be regenerated, by me to be accepted. Here is manifestly a transfer in the sight of angels, to the glory and happiness of man. This, according to common sense, agreeable to the naked word of God, denotes two persons, and is a transaction between certain parties, which none but a man, with his fingers in his ears, can be stout in denying. This Jesus did God raise up according to the Scriptures. As thou hast sent me into the world, here is the embassy plainly demonstrated. No one sent himself, quite otherwise; his language would be, I came of myself, Father and man in one person, to satisfy mine own broken laws; to reconcile the world unto myself. The Son came cloathed with humility, to the glory of whom? Himself? No; of God the Father, who declares he will not give his glory to another; who speaks out of Christ, when he says, I am God and not man; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed; *for glory be*

to his name, this God, in his boundless mercy, and eternal purposes, became the just, and in Christ the justifier of the unjust. He could do it by no other means, and men might have suffered an eternity of torment before they would have hit on an adequate price of redemption, which he transacted by his Son, who being made so much better than the angels, as by inheritance, he hath obtained a more excellent name than they. He was appointed, that he might appear in the presence of God for us—*what for?* to make intercession; *with whom?* because *on earth he was God-man*, the Son of God! why to stand in the presence to intercede with, to plead before, another; even *God the Father*: and thus is proved; nay, rather proves himself to be the one Mediator *between* God and man. Here is a separate distinct character and person pointed out: here is evidently an intervening, necessary, active, honourable, sufficient and godlike thing, called by the angel the Holy Thing, not only related to God infinitely more so than by creation, but consecrated by God as well as owned by him. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Had not the law been deaf to any paliation, Christ need not have suffered; therefore God and his holy law, as to satisfaction for sin, was inflexible? The angels saw his glory, and despaired of making up the breach: his Son was more invincible, even by a participation of his nature; and hence,
in

in the volume of the book it is written, all power is given into my hands, by God the Father, for the redemption of man. In the work of regeneration I hope no one will be so hardy as to deny this Son to be a grand particular, of a *principal derivation from God himself*.

Mr. Sibby invokes us to ascend higher, and descend deeper than our senses can stretch: without the channel and mean of our faculties, the Spirit never acts; but he calls on us to believe and receive things repugnant to common sense. These are his mysteries which we are not commanded to believe; yet to serve his turn in other places, the chief engine for the conveyance of his chimerical sentiments, he trusts to introduce through the channel of our rationality, because expressly contrary to the Christian faith.

In the 27th page, your Author says, we may see clearly that it was in allusion to the eternal state of the divine in himself, that our Lord said to his disciples, Before Abraham was, I am—Gabriel might prove his divinity by the same comparison. Christ is entered into Heaven itself, now to appear, not in the person, but the presence of God for us; for ever to sit down at the right hand of God. Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ; these are Scriptures that maintain the distinction, and which was clearly displayed when our Saviour

came among us; on which occasion all the sons of God shouted for joy, who loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows, and the people shall praise thee for ever and ever. Who ascendeth up on high, who receiveth gifts for men; from *whom*? surely no other than God the Father, by the reconciliation of the cross; and thus truth sprung out of the earth, and righteousness looked down from heaven.

Man's duty now is to pray that he may receive the grace, the love, and favor of God; and in so doing, the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein; the will of God, through Jesus Christ, is wrote in legible characters, and he that runs may read: to the poor is the Gospel preached, who without the science of correspondencies, may receive the grace of God. That this precious blood-shedding was a voluntary act I admit; for Christ said he had power to take it up and lay it down: on the cross he cried, Father forgive them. When in his agonies, he exclaimed, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? This evidently denoted, that his Father was now viewing him as bearing our sins, and justly dying for offences not actually committed, but virtually imputed, and, *as God*, was veiled by the purity of his law, in the admission of the sacrifice to his justice.

Mr.

Mr. Sibly's heterogeneous speculative notions have a very contrary tendency in the heart, to promote vital holiness. He places us in an independent situation as to our choice and rule of action; whereas our Lord says, none cometh unto me except the Father draw him, which attraction empties a man of self, and prepares him involuntarily to receive the word in the love of it.

Our very knowledge of Christ, exclusive of his influence, is an insurmountable barrier to our closing with him. All these things have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet? said the young man in the Gospel: we set up too high a value upon ourselves, and think, with your Preacher, what a noble creature is man! for what grand purposes was he made? but Christ says, Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of God. What did the man, restored to sight, know more than, whereas I was blind, now I see. He felt the internal principle of love to Christ, and worshipped him. What did the knowledge of the woman, recorded in the Book of Martyrs, amount to more, than a divine influence, when she said, I cannot plead for Christ, but I love him so that I can die for him. The Lord expressly says, he will put his fear into our hearts. The Lord rebukes Satan, when he accuses Joshua, and says, Is not this a brand plucked out of the

the fire? And Jesus told Peter, Satan had desired to sift him as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: which illustrates the offices of Christ, as Prophet, Priest, and King, to the believer.

But to return to the Trinitarian situation of our Lord, when expiring on the cross, he cried with a loud voice, Father, into thine hands I commit my spirit. Having said this, he gave up the ghost; not the Holy Ghost, but separately his own Divine Spirit, which constituted his person as God, and qualified him to be a Mediator. The Comforter, he expressly promised should come, after he ascended up to heaven, and take of the glory of Christ, and shew it unto his disciples; not that it was himself, or any part thereof, either in person or office, but only in purpose and design; and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you *another* Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father shall send in my name. And I go unto my Father, for my Father is greater than I; but that the world may know I love the Father, as the Father gave me commandment, so I do. So distinctly, frequently, and generally spoken of is the Father Son and Spirit, that it is impossible to comprehend them in one person or character: they cannot be united by such an unwarrantable reduction, without ascribing to the person what relates alone to the covenant

framed

framed from the beginning of time by the grand trinity, the council of heaven, the performance is incomplete without the interference of each member, by which it was framed. The salvation of man has separated the God-head into various offices, which unite again in the final redemption of man.

This prying into the Deity, I conceive to be fatal, when actuated by mere curiosity; it cannot be essential to salvation to know whether so many offices include and signify so many persons. If the New Jerusalem professors did not begin at the wrong end, they would not be so strenuous on this point. As to the other feature in their doctrine, it is too palpably erroneous to call in one argument for its confutation; for it is well known man can pervert and metamorphose the will of man; and shall not the Almighty change his mind? Is not his power sufficient? Is it not equal to all the hardness, and impenitance of man? On the other hand, the heart is so deranged by sin, that nothing short of unlimited power can unite it to praise the Lord; but your Author rests its success on the self-existence and entire freedom of the will. Has God power over the body and not over the mind? No man ever lived but had the moral agency of the Spirit; and Nicodemus, had it in an eminent degree; yet he must, if savingly regenerated, be born again, not of flesh, nor of the *will* of man, but of God; therefore,
instead

instead of elucidating the subject, Mr. S. confounds it; and although he divide heaven with his compasses, and partition off a trinity of hells beneath; and "into the heaven of heavens again resolve an earthly guest, and draw the imperial air," he must shew me more of his first works, to convince me what part or lot he has in this matter. A broken and a contrite heart thou wilt not despise. Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, &c. But here is no humiliating self-abased views of sin; no effectual preparedness hinted at by which the grace of God is manifested. This is evidently set aside by man's option, to accept or reject his proffered mercy. It is said, thou shalt put thy law into their hearts. This important absolutely essential part skipped over, every advance a man takes to get into Christ, carries him the farther off. By imagination he may believe he has royal blood in his veins, because of his likeness to it, without the title of inheritance to justify him in behalf of it; but on putting in his claim, he will be answered with, *I know you not.*

True, Mr. S. directs the man to Christ, but tells him at the same time he has no power to change him, unless the man chuses. This is no less than a blasphemous diminution of the sovereignty of God. Throughout the whole, how omnigenous and unsearchable his doctrine, and his meaning past finding out.

out. Such exquisitely figurative arguments are destitute of the energy and affection of solid truth, consequently cannot be frugiferous and effectual to salvation. The compaternity of Jehovah, in the redemption of man, carries all before it, wherever it is ordained. The subjects of its salvation perceive the spiritual sceptre, and acknowledge their allegiance.

Mr. Sibly discovers such aptitude in the illustration of the several expanses, that a man would suppose he had been admitted into the third hell, and highest heavens, to give so perfect a description; but to picturesque the beauty and situation of the heavens, without furnishing us with suitable wings to fly there, is only a mortification in setting happiness before us, for ever out of our reach. The divisibility of the celestial state, has no warrant for its conception. Christ says of his disciples, Father I will that they may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory; the glory that I had with thee before the world began*.

Mr. Sibly's, "as it were's," are the only subterfuges he has left to creep out of. Why soar so high in the vast expansion of imagination, without evidence and proof. In his next discourse he may divide the spirits of the just made perfect into a thousand classes,

* It is to be hoped this text will be noticed by every one who wishes to give an answer to the unbeliever.

and

and into as many states as they are represented, to differ in glory, as much as one star differeth from another; but if he presumes to be so nice in his disquisition, I shall be ready to enquire, by way of standard and comparison, if it has been revealed to him, in what degree and number of perfection he is to be ranked himself. Ah, Sir, these ideas possess an elation of thought, too presumptive for truth, and too wild for approbation. I really believe, from observation, Baron Swedenburgh's professors think more highly of themselves than they ought to think; and if he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, they are exalted in conception, to be humbled indeed: the religion of the Gospel thrives in the simplicity of it: the child-like teachable disposition grows thereby; but imaginary notions, and speculative experiments, neither have the promise of success in this life, or that which is to come. The glory of the Lord never will be fathomed by the plummet of man's understanding; neither is he bound to reveal more of himself, than is necessary to the sinner's translation out of the kingdom and dominion of satan into grace. It is lessening the character and atonement of Christ, to say that he was separated from his divine nature when on earth; and when both are conjoined, it appears plainly he spoke of the Father as the primordial person in the Godhead. When it is said ^{no} on man hath seen God at any time, it
refers

refers to the Father; but God the Son *has been seen*, and God the Spirit is also felt by his operation in the heart of every true believer.

Mr. Sibly says, without this trinity, Jehovah cannot be; yet, he includes all in one distinct person. But Christ said, If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. I come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not. Go and teach all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, with which text I shall satisfy myself, that this meant not a trinity of essences merely, but persons; not only a trinity of representations, but of distinct qualities and offices, which, when viewed as one God, can be blended only in council, power, and execution.

I firmly believe the enlightened evangelical men of the present day view your new-fangled church with more pity than concern for the spread of it. They have the power of triumphing over her sentiments by many unequivocal texts of Scripture, and endless demonstrative arguments. Some may think, if a man dreams, he has a right to enjoy his own interpretation of it; if his fancy presents a vision to his imagination, why not let him be amused with it? Others again wishing to avoid controversy, wait to see it fall to the ground of itself; all mystical fabrics being built

* The Trinity resembles snow, rain and hail, which in nature is the same, though distinct in form, and different in representation.

on sandy foundations. For my own part, I consider it only an hodiernal religious romance. I also solemnly assure you, I had not such contemptible notions of it before I studied it, which I undertook at your particular request. It is wrong to shut one's mind against conviction and information; and now I cannot be so illiberal as to refrain from giving an honest opinion of it. As a writer, I will allow your friend to eclipse me: as a believer, he goes far beyond me, soaring much higher on the wings of fancy than I can perceive him, by the eye of faith. As a sinner, the balance is against me; for while he is ascending up into his expanses, I am left to mourn over an evil heart of sin and unbelief; but as an admirer of Jesus Christ, who is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him, I hope, according to the degree of my faith and capacity, *equally to love him*; and I rejoice, that his salvation is gratuitous; that he is the friend of sinners, and that he came not to save the whole, but they which are sick. The whole need no such physician; he is welcome to the self-condemned: he is propitious to all those that are weary and heavy laden by the burden of their guilt: one day he will shew that his ways are not as our ways, nor are his thoughts as our thoughts; and in all ages he has manifestly proved, that as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them

that

that fear him, whose gubernation over the minutest concern declares his omnipresence and greatness, and by which means his consolations are neither few nor small towards them that love him.

In Mr. Sibly's 65th page, he says, People form ideas of God being a Spirit, as of some hobgoblin. It must be on evanescent principles that David exclaimed, If I ascend into heaven thou art there; if I descend down to hell, thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, there thine eyes seeth me, &c. Intimating, that God's presence fills the immensity of space, and that his eyes are over all his works. After this, he endeavours to think of the Lord, according to human form, and gives *this* as an abiding idea, whereas it is judging of the Lord by sense and not by faith, through which he is never to be comprehended, till that which is perfect shall appear; and faith shall be lost in the fruition of knowledge.

Mr. Sibly has lumped his sentiments of the consistence of God by a jumble of Scripture made up of appearances, visions, revelations, voices, dreams, and what not; by which means he has personified them all, caused them to signify one and the same person, to the exclusion of particular and general agency, and made God to execute his own errands, setting aside the ministry of angels, who stand around

C

him

him to do his pleasure. Abraham saw the day of our Lord only by faith, and was glad in the prospect; not really his body — This 65th page also makes a mock of one's patience, and insults common sense, when it declares Christ came in the body, and left his soul behind him, besides robbing the atonement of all that is intrinsic, valuable, and sufficient; making it out that a body which lived, was liable to die and suffered death, ever existed *without a soul*, which soul was Christ's divine nature, and which on the cross he commended to his Father, who is God and *not man*; therefore there could be no divine human till after the incarnation of Christ, who was received up to heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

Such parts of holy writ as favor of a spiritual interpretation, by this new church, are literary received; and others, that are, *bona fide*, literally written, are figuratively read, and cruelly mangled.

The ancients never had any authority to contemplate the external appearance of Jehovah: a voice: a conversation: a temporary form and visions, are only allegorical vehicles to the mind. Again, Mr. Sibly speaks of the body acting independent of the soul, which he says is the divine man, and which the ancients saw; whereas the Scripture say, in the fulness of time the only Son of the Father took upon him the form of man.

Before

Before I proceed, I would ask the Preacher how he found out our Saviour was possessed with false principles, wherein he discovered hereditary evils; whether Satan was not disappointed in the experiment of tempting his humanity, finding him without sin. These are sentiments so grossly exceptionable, so easily confuted, so self-contradictory, that I blush to think I have given the doctrine a thought, or ever valued it so much as to reply to it. But when men get out of their road in religion, the Devil acts like a jack-a-lantern, to them with a lo! Here is Christ! lo! there. Having nothing but the light of the sun to read by, and the false light of reason to walk by, they wander to and fro, finding no rest: sometimes they strike a partial spark by the use of their acquired knowledge and the light of nature, but ere their hearts are warmed by it; it expires, and not being of *divine fire*, is *extinguished as fast as kindled*. Thomas saw something more than man in Christ. When our Saviour condescended to reveal himself to him, he cried out, My Lord and my God! Soon after, he as God and man in one person, ascended to his Father, which was in heaven before, for ever to appear in his intervenient capacity; according to his own saying, I go unto my Father, for my Father is greater than I. Can it be supposed by any but these presuming novelists, that man's diminutive powers can

reach incomprehensibility itself? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Who can delineate his countenance? Who judge of the height of his stature? Who says he is no more nor no less? Had he left us so much undetermined by an indefinite knowledge of his character, how lost and deplorable our situation. Tell me of the exact person of the Almighty, and then stand with thine arm lifted over the sea, and declare to it, Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther.

Such puny apprehensions of God, collected from the light of created objects, so inimical to the revelation he hath made of himself, again I pronounce to be exceedingly erroneous. In what point of view does all this theoretical disquisition profit the hearer? In what sense is it essential that the illiterate believer should be taught the length and breadth of the finger of the Almighty? rather lead him to the cross of Christ; shew him the vast penalty paid for sin, that by this, through faith, he may have his debts due to the justice of God *for ever pardoned*. If he asks, Who is the Lord that I may serve him? shew him a reconciled God in Christ: shew him what the Lord requireth of him, nor lead him into a maze of specious interpretations, which will for ever incapacitate him to receive the *one thing needful*.

In these remarks I considered it needless
to

to go out of the bounds of my design, and touch upon the particular sentiments of the Swedenburgians, some of whom I am acquainted with, who acknowledge his doctrines are stretched beyond their true meaning: have but confind myself to the particular absurdities of these discourses: where it was possible, I have argued with temper; and where otherwise, I suffer it to pass, being zealous for the truth. 'Tis base and cruel to mislead in this age of dissipation and folly; the alarm ought to be sounded, and the naked message of the Gospel faithfully delivered. Ministers are not called to an emulation in popularity, to a display of their different parts and acquirements, but to real usefulness, in the conversion of the sinner. Faith will satisfy the man as to the ultimates of Deity; the teacher ought to build him up in the realities of, and ultimate of his salvation. *He has an immortal spirit's welfare at stake.* By one overt act of the Almighty, he has made man to live for ever; and he can as well wink at the violation of his law as destroy his existence. And herein I again differ widely from Mr. Sibly; and insist there is no immortality in that which is dependant on any one for life. His arguments on this head are truly impotent, so is his representation of the Christian's belief of the present day, fallacious. But the compliment to the New

Church is complete in describing it to be composed of them only that keep his commandments. With them how unnecessary is that Scripture, which says, judgment shall begin at the house of God, (plainly intimating where there is wheat, there is chaff.) How indirect is his description of the believer's experience? What a diminutive idea of that grand and inexpressible delight, which upholds him in his course, and causes him to go on his way rejoicing. He has more than the heat and light, Mr. S. so much talks off: being sustained by the bread which cometh down from heaven.

What Mr. Sibly means by God's concordance to man's sensuality, I am quite at a loss to conceive. Cannot God bring man from his evil way no otherwise than by approving of his sin, in the end to disprove of it? According to Mr. Sibly, what a great reflection on mankind, that he has the powers of salvation in himself! after all, never exerts it for his good. But I maintain, the little will he has when experiencing the bitterness of sin in all its consequences, is insufficient to restore him, unless the Father draw him. As much of the Scriptures as relate to our salvation, shews plainly the way; *walk ye in it*. Such of the prophecies as related to the coming of Christ, are clearly distinguished; such as remain to be explained, may be adapted for some future

future age of the church; and some more latent still may be left for the interpretation of God himself. I would have Mr. Sibly beware of substituting flights of imagination for things revealed.

I recommend every hearer of the Gospel to compare the Preacher's doctrine, sentiments, and conduct, with that great body of divinity, the sermon on the mount. Christ gave a parable, to shew that men ought continually to pray and not to faint. This is a duty very little dwelt on in Mr. Sibly's discourses. Many ideas of his might be stripped of their mystery by the truth of the Scriptures, and their origin be overtaken in the breast of speculation; but as I may have occasion to treat of this doctrine more extensively by a review of the several publications, in the same interest, I shall hasten to a conclusion, in order to give you a few thoughts on the true object of worship. In the interim, remember the sad consequences of enthusiasm in error. It promotes self, instead of holiness: gives independance and sovereignty to the will: its heaven is in the world: its god is the devil: its soul is in bondage: its mind is un sanctified: its faith is dead: its meat is the applause of men: its drink the dregs of the vials of God's wrath. While the unassuming trembling character, that's just born of God, treads cautiously, walks feebly, knows and feels that in
himself

himself dwelleth no good thing: is tempted on all hands, cast down by enemies from within and without, yet, notwithstanding, he is enabled to stretch forth his hand, and lean upon Jesus. He answers every accusation with yes, it is too true. The blood of Christ which pardoneth all sin, echoes in his ears, invigorates his faith: afraid of himself, he takes shelter in Christ, the promise and oath of God; the inviolable covenant of the whole council of Heaven, Father, Son, and Spirit. The armies of the God in trinity, are all on the side of this progressive believer: he goes from strength to strength, till at last, having passed through manifold tribulations, he is enabled by his adoption to cry out, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*. That you may draw an impartial conclusion after reading these thoughts, and search the Scriptures for yourself, and thereby have everlasting life, is the wish of him, who has attempted to exalt the Lord by his own word, which exceeds human revelations; and who remains your servant in Christ,

EARNESTUS.

W - H O

IS THE

Right Object of Worship ?

1 Cor. xiv. 13. *For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the Churches of the Saints.*

THE purity and value of religion, is known by the opposition it meets with in the world, from those who are not in possession of it; and where satan is in most danger of encroachments on his kingdom, he selects instruments out of the bosom of a church, among other means, to keep his interest alive. Nay, it is not unfrequent, he makes use of the minister or chiefs in a congregation to mislead the people—but woe unto him, by whom offences come: it were better that a millstone were hung about his neck, and he was cast into the midst of the sea.

I lament exceedingly to see people, who are really called, rest their perseverance in Godliness on such slight grounds as they commonly do: they see the evil of sin, and need
of

of mercy; but Christ becomes more or less desirable, as the minister's preaching suits their ear; whereas, by searching into the word for themselves, God will prepare them to understand his doctrine, and enable them to detect the preacher where it is not consonant with the light reflected by the Scriptures. Hence, by neglecting this, many a poor soul falls short of the prize, being led into a maze of doctrines, and driven to and fro by error. He soon grows lukewarm in his love: soon the world comes in and choaks up the small grain of truth remaining, and he bends to every new sentiment; *so that many are called, but few are chosen.*

As I have a leisure day, I shall attempt to answer a question very prevalent at Wolverhampton; What, or who is the right object of worship? I shall not allow the believer to be included among the persons I address. The exercises of his soul; the witness of the Spirit; the love of God; the suitableness of Christ; the answers received, are full demonstrations to his mind, that he worships no false or uncertain objects; is under no peradventure as to the ultimates of his service; that as Christ is in God so he is in Christ, safe from error, the world, principalities, and powers: nothing shall separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. If a man wants to know who he ought to worship, it is a sad truth he exposes himself

himself to, that he has never worshipped at all. God out of Christ is a consuming fire; but God in Christ is reconciled unto the sinner: the Comforter takes of these things and reveals them *to him*, who till now thought himself under the curse. These are the three that bear record in heaven. These are the three that condescend to unite their characters, offices, and councils, for man's redemption. These are the three that formed the plan of salvation. These are the three that act in concert for the happiness of man. These are the three that looked, and there was none to deliver, and entered into an immutable covenant. These are the three that united to save, and divided to accomplish.

Take each individually, what good can accrue to the condemned sinner? Can God hear him, when he cries unto him without an adequate surety? Can Christ regard him, if God stands aloof, and will not be reconciled? Can the Spirit save him, or be a comforter unto him, without the interference of the other persons in this glorious mystery? No more could the former make the sinner acquainted with the grand design, without the agency of the Holy Ghost, which proceedeth from, and is one with the Father and Son. When the soul loves, it is well acquainted with its object. Where have they lain my Beloved? Saw you him in whom my soul delighteth, &c.? Thou shalt

shall set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death. As I live, saith God, every knee shall bow to me in heaven and earth. The believer can say, for God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit, in the Gospel of his Son, whom all men shall honor, even as they honor the Father; wherefore God hath exalted him, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow; that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father: all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall worship him. Cavillers are of the disaffected kind: I always suspect the sincerity of an unsettled wavering disputant. The soul that is born of the Spirit, will say, with gladness, I know him in whom I have believed. There is many a precious soul in glory who never divided the trinity in his worship. There is many a way-faring man, though a fool, that alternately worshipped the three, Father, Son and Spirit, inheriting the promises, and pleasingly engaged in the self-same worship he began upon earth, crying, Holy, Holy, Holy, an ascription for each person constituting one Lord God of Sabbaoth, casting his crown before the Lamb, which sitteth on the right hand of his Father, ascribing salvation to him who hath washed him in his own blood; and having abounded in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost, he now ascribes sanctifica-

tion and glorification to the power of the Spirit of God.

What a delusion Satan beclouds this enquiry with, Who is the Lord? He well knows that such have ears but hear not; eyes but see not; wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction, *that are at a loss to determine it.* For if they were often in meditation with earnest prayer to God, they would soon be convinced, that the Father and Son are one; that the Spirit in them is one. It can be no offence to God, nor can there be any impropriety in worshipping the Son; the Father not only has commanded it, but takes pleasure in it, and accepts the service for his Son's sake; the Son cannot be displeased when he has given an example to the contrary. The Spirit represents them both having searched into the deep things of God. All manner of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven against the Father and Son; but neither in this world, or that which is to come, the sin which is committed against the Holy Ghost. Surely, in conjunction with the other Divine Persons, he also can be no improper object of worship. When men stumble at the mode of adoration, it too plainly indicates they have fallen from their steadfastness; but when they hesitate about the object, it awfully bespeaks them strangers to the common wealth of Israel. When men join a party, in opposition to revealed, as well

as established religion, they have got a *favorite to defend*: every tendency to destroy it awakens their resentment; and they hug the serpent the closer in their arms. To recant is a mortification: it will inevitably expose them; their pride cannot endure the shock: they are more zealous for error than they ever were for the truth. Such a one has prompters enough both within and without to urge him on to greater strides of infidelity, and at length he finds a propitious opportunity of shaking religion off altogether, and never more think about it. Then he must have some substitute, and what more suitable to him than politics, the high seats in assemblies, the name of being rich, encreasing in trade, and being reckoned among the great ones of the town: to accomplish this, covetousness *becomes the idol*, that he may afford, at certain opportunities, *to be liberal*, and great in the esteem of men.

The modern Pharoahs are crying out, Who is the Lord, that I may serve him? Or what is the right object of worship? Such have secret practices and say, Tush! God seeth not, or indulged sentiments inimical to vital holiness; and having drank deep into error, try to obstruct the course of the true worshipper.—Who is the Lord? Pharoah, under all his seeming enquiries, remains a perfect stranger to this adorable mysterious Jehovah;

in

in council, Father, Son, and Spirit, in operation.

Shew me the various evidence of the happiness of them who worshipped only *one* or *two* out of the three, and I will produce clouds of witnesses who bore testimony in their lives, and honoured the profession of Father, Son, and Spirit, in their deaths. How many sealed it with their blood? How many living witnesses are there still, who glory in the truth, and live in full assurance? Miserable enquirer! Has the Lord been with us so long in his preached Gospel, and ye have not known him? *How seekest thou*, by asking in the street, enquiring by way of perplexing, being an alien to him? dost thou feel delight in finding his minister at a loss to answer thy crude questions? Be assured thou wilt never know him till he seek for thee, then it will be too late to enquire for him: it will be needless: the terror of his throne: the majesty of his person shall strike conviction, full of dismay. The trumpet sounding to judgment, conscience condemning before you are heard: the mountains refusing to shelter: the covenant of peace sealed up, and cannot admit another name—Contemplate your prospect. All this you owe to speculative enquiries, instead of hearty desires. Kiss the Son, least he be angry and ye perish. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him, for he is thy Lord, worship thou him. Pray

likewise, as he did to the Father, which is invisible, and the Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Quench not the Spirit: grieve not the Spirit; for we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit; and I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, equal with myself, that he may abide with you for ever.

This question, as it is now advanced, is a dart of the enemy, shot beyond the apparent object: it is levelled at *thee believer*: never be seen without the shield of faith: cover thy heart with the breast-plate of salvation; yet I know thy safety, for ye are washed, for ye are sanctified, for ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus; and by the Spirit of our God, nevertheless be vigilant, watching unto prayer. As there is need of daily intercession, so there is of the daily sacrifices of prayer and praise, with constant watchfulness. They did run well, who are now turned aside to vain janglings; but this doth hinder them a general unstudied, un sanctified worship; they shone for a time, but can build no higher, being uncertain of the foundation. They have now to begin their first works, but the enemy of souls stands in the way by a thousand arguments, all supported by that trinity of evils, *pride, self-sufficiency, and carnal security*; in dwelling corruption, being in perfect subordination to the prince of darkness, keeps them
constantly

constantly in exercise. The weak Christian may doubt his interest, and whether he is right in his worship; For this cause let him be constant in bowing his knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; for him all things are working together for good. If he lacks consolation, let him meditate on the honour of God in religion: this will have as good an effect as the exercise of a sermon, which sometimes may be badly heard, and at others as indifferently preached. In study we are delighted to see the promises given to Adam, repeated to Abram, confirmed by Moses, and performed in Jesus Christ: here we see a chain of truths, affording one another mutual support. If ye continue in my word, ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

By the enquiry so prevalent among the societies at Wolverhampton, it augurs a state of bondage, among those who are in doubt about the right object of worship. Their interest is surely invalidated: if they have offered millions of prayers, and are divided about the right object now, all is undone. If they have spoke in the name of the Lord, all is overturned by this confirmed ignorance of the object of worship. Such as are but setting out Zionward, and enquire with a single eye to the glory of God, and the establishing their souls in a right way to a city of habitation,

Jefus fays to them, I am the way, walk ye in it. If they are in doubt whether God is the fupreme and only object of worfhip, fearch the Scriptures, and they will be convinced to the contrary, as clearly as the fun is the light of the world. If becaufe he hath made his Son, Lord over the creation, being part of his nature, the firft-born of every creature; men fay that the Father hath relinquifhed his claim to our adoration in favor of his Son, fearch the Scriptures, and you find his glory he will not give unto another; and that in every thing by prayer and fupplication, you are to let your requests be made known unto God. God revealeth the things appertaining to Godlinefs, by his Spirit, confequently the Spirit alfo will be enquired of for thefe things, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. There is no claim on the mercy of God, but will be fully paid by the Triune Jehovah. There is no fin of any description truly repented of, but is for ever cancelled by this concentered Godhead; and if men will *difpute with bitternefs, yield*, even though you have truth on your fide; for according to Saurin, when a man refufes to admit a propofition fufficiently demonftrated, the more you prefs him, the farther he will recede from you. The principle that induces him to cavil, is pride, and not weaknefs of capacity. If you perfift in fhewing him the truth, you will irritate his
pride

pride by confounding it, whereas if you give his passion time to cool, and subside, perhaps he will turn of himself, and renounce his error.

Having concisely shewn the true object of prayer, I would next throw out a few hints how it is to be performed with success and advantage. The world, by nature, know not God. When entered into the covenant of grace, the sinner keeps unceasingly crying, Create in me a clean heart, O God; renew a right spirit within me. Soon he begins to see that God, Jehovah, hath magnified his word above all his name. As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so he desires the Lord, and soon we find him worshipping the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength.

Now begins the conflict:—Satan commences war: the soul sees its own feebleness: in the first onset he cries lustily to the Lord, whose ears are open to his intreaties. He is not taken out of the tribulation, but preserved in it, that the power of God might therewith have occasion to rest upon him. Frequently his views are obscured, and he doubts his interest in the salvation of Jesus. This does not lessen the character of the Redeemer in his esteem. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: he besieges the throne of grace: he wrestles in spirit: shortly he has a glimpse
of

of his Lord's countenance, and he thinks heaven is begun: his common concerns in life may hap stir his remaining corruption, and veils his beautiful prospects. Now he humbles himself anew before God; applies to the blood of sprinkling, waits for a fresh manifestation of the Spirit, which probably does not arrive, till by being often in the fire, he comes out like gold seven times purified. Different language now shews his progression in his warfare; and though by walking in darkness, for a time, having no light, he is insensible of his advance in holiness, yet his experience proves him to be much nearer his heavenly home. Soon he will say, (*aye by the next sunshiny day*) henceforth is laid up for me a crown of glory, which God the righteous Judge shall give to all them that love his appearance.

Notwithstanding he finds it a hard thing to be a Christian, and hard indeed would it be to him, without Supernatural aid; still the thing that he would not, that he does, which constrains him to cry out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death. He sees daily need to pray that his faith fail not; that the flame of his love may be fanned into life by the Holy Spirit; but soon, *very soon*, having set to his seal that God is true; having exhorted both friends and enemies to trust in him; having borne his solemn testimony to his holy calling, he takes
a thank-

a thankful farewell of the dream of time, and meets the last great enemy with more fortitude than even he did the smallest temptation before: *O death where is thy sting? thou also art swallowed up in victory.* Having said this he soon wakes in his Father's kingdom. The Father delights to hear the humble prayer: the Son sees in it the travail of his soul, and is satisfied; the Spirit *applies the promises*; convinces and leads to Jesus every obstacle which the law puts in the way; *Grace removes*, and the prayer of faith availeth so much as to open all the treasures of heaven for his succour: no man shall beguile such of their reward. He exultingly says, My heart is fixed, O God; my heart is fixed; my Beloved is mine, and I am his.

Let no uncertainty in others lead the weak Christian to suspect he is wrong; for there hath no temptation happened unto you but such as is common to men: but God is faithful, and will answer every petition that comes to him by believing, while thousands are enquiring the road: not having set out, he will be going on his way rejoicing. No doubts: no disquisitions betray him into one hard thought of his Lord. Throughout all these briars, he makes his way, pressing towards the prize of his high calling. He owns, and without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness: God manifest in the flesh; but he has his eye
on

on another mystery, the new birth in his heart. This being the consequence of the former, he *is satisfied*: he acts faith upon the promises, and expects, when he has passed through time, in eternity he shall fully apprehend that for which he was apprehended of God; that having seen such great glory in the effects, he shall behold with an eternity of delight, the great mysteries and revealed grandeur of the cause.

If good men argue this point, let it be done with reverence and great caution: if they are settled in the faith, they should be wary how they wound the belief of the babes in Christ. These are his sacred charge, and shall he not avenge his own elect? I would rather recommend the elders in the Lord to use their talents in promulgating the Gospel to the utmost of their abilities, and support it by their example, which is very influential, and will undoubtedly prosper the growth of religion in the neighbourhood, in the town, and city.

To worship God aright, is a pleasant service: to do it with a single eye ensures the notice of God, who, when spoken of as the God of our worship, implies the three almighty counsellors: who can address them as the cause of our salvation, without including the whole council of God. Taken individually,

dually, the word characterizes them by their official capacity, Father, Saviour, and Comforter: in the great work of salvation they are equal in power, and by way of grandeur, called the Holy One, being one in council, one in purpose, though separate and distinct in their offices and operations. When we bow the knee, and order our cause before God, we may take in the three for the whole, and address them as one; but if we want the Father to draw us, and appropriate to us the salvation of his Son: if we want the Son to intercede for us, or the Spirit to sanctify us, we address them in their respective characters. The love of the Father surpasseth knowledge. Let us make man when man had fallen; he found out a ransom: the love of the Son was stronger than death, and he gave his soul an offering for sin: the love of the Spirit employs him in striving in us, that notwithstanding every opposition, he may bring us to glory; and if this God be for us, who shall be against us? To invoke this God in council, this *triumverate triune*, is one of the noblest acts of the creature, and pregnant with blessings. The answer is a trinity of effects, which constitute his heirship to God. The Son imputes his righteousness; the Father adopts, the Spirit sanctifies, and his name is written in the book of life.

Happy

Happy is the man that is in such a case
 yea, blessed is he that hath these Lords for his
 God. That Nicodemus, like we, may not
 be enquiring how can these things be, but
 like Thomas, take each and all for our Lord
 and our God (thus having the witness within
 ourselves) is the desire of

EARNESTUS.

THE END.



